



Tampa Bay Watch Announces Appointment of New Executives
Florida Nonprofit Hires Seasoned Mission-based Association Executives to Lead Organizational Growth and the TBW Discovery Center at St. Pete Pier™

TIERRA VERDE, Fla. (November 7, 2019) - [Tampa Bay Watch](#), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to restore and protect the bay's habitat through stewardship and community awareness, today announced the appointment of two new executive-level staff: Dwayne Virgint, Executive Director of the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center and Leanna Jackson, Director of Development for the organization. Both of these highly qualified professionals bring a wealth of experience, expertise and diversity to Tampa Bay Watch, which is building and operating the new [Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center](#), slated to open in Spring 2020.

“We are very proud and excited to welcome both Leanna and Dwayne. Each comes to the organization with years of high-profile leadership experience that will both help to propel the organization’s growth and expansion,” said Peter Clark, President of Tampa Bay Watch. “We anticipate that our Discovery Center at the new St. Pete Pier™ will host upwards of 100,000 visitors in its first year, creating a powerful public face for our mission to restore and protect Tampa Bay. The creativity and expertise of our two new executives will be key to this success.”

As Executive Director, Dwayne Virgint is responsible for the completion, launch and operations of the new 3000 sq. ft. Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center. His goal is to ensure that generations of young leaders will continue the mission of protecting the bay and the World Ocean. Dwayne brings more than 25 years of executive experience in leadership, operations and management of mission-based organizations including zoos, aquariums, and museums. He served over twelve years as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and its affiliated companies in Albuquerque, NM. Dwayne earned his bachelor’s degree in advertising from the University of Bridgeport (Conn.).

In her role as Development Director, Leanna Jackson is responsible for fundraising, development of corporate and private partnerships and securing sponsors and donors for both the Discovery Center and the Tampa Bay Watch Tierra Verde facility. Leanna is passionate about encouraging environmental stewardship. She comes to Tampa Bay Watch from the Society for Conservation Biology where she secured funding for global biodiversity protection efforts. Leanna has raised more than \$54 million over the course of her career and is committed to helping communities fund solutions to environmental problems. Leanna is a native of Lakeland, FL and earned her bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the University of South Florida.

Incorporated in 1993, Tampa Bay Watch performs habitat restoration and protection activities throughout the year, relying heavily on the efforts of community volunteers. These programs seek to build citizen awareness, concern and participation through environmental outreach. In early 2020, Tampa Bay Watch will open its second facility at the new St. Pete Pier™. The [Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center](#) will include a 2000 sq. ft. interactive visitor experience showcasing the economic, ecological and recreational value of the Tampa Bay estuary to residents and visitors as well as an academic component that will expand environmental and educational outreach programs to Tampa Bay area schools, residents and visitors. The center will also have a dedicated Eco-tour boat offering on-water environmental programming and will be open year-round (except Thanksgiving and Christmas day) from 10am to 6pm.

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About Tampa Bay Watch

Tampa Bay Watch is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) stewardship program dedicated exclusively to the charitable and scientific purpose of protecting and restoring the marine and wetland environments of the Tampa Bay estuary encompassing over 400 square miles of open water and 2,300 square miles of highly- developed watershed. Tampa Bay Watch involves more than 10,000 youth and adult volunteers each year in hands on habitat restoration projects. For more information, visit <http://www.tampabaywatch.org> or call 727-867-8166.